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IRANIAN FOREIGN POLICY AFTER THE NUCLEAR DEAL

by

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Biography

Lieutenant Colonel Ali Al-Amri is a Civil Engineering graduate of the Sultan Qaboos University. He entered the Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO) in 1992 as a student cadet at the Initial Officer Training of the Sultan Qaboos Air Academy. After that, he continued his officer training in the Royal Air Force (RAF) Cranwell and was commissioned to the rank of First Lieutenant in February 1994. In 1996, he was graduated from No. 1 Squadron RAFO Masirah as multi-engine pilot. During the period from March 1996 to October 2011, he served in No. 5 Squadron RAFO Salalah as a transport pilot flying the Skyvan, and in No. 2 and No.16 Squadrons flying a maritime patrol aircraft and the Lockheed Martin C-130H. He worked as Instructor Pilot in the flying training school flying Pilatus PC-9m and instructed both elementary and basic flying students. In 2007 to 2008, he attended the Advanced Command and Staff Course at the Defense Academy of the United Kingdom and earned a Master degree in defense studies from Kings College London (KCL). He worked in several staff positions and he is currently a student at the Air War College at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama.

Abstract

The nuclear agreement between the (P5+1) countries and Iran is a recognition by the international community to put Iran back as before the 1979 revolution. However, the infinite political complexities that are intertwined today in the whole Middle East will not disappear instantaneously with this nuclear agreement and the complexities of the political status in the region are adding to the difficulty in determining what Iran foreign policy would be after the nuclear deal. The paper will present an argument about the possible actions that Iran can take to advance its national security agenda. As well, it will consider under what conditions Iran might implement and follow those possible actions. The paper will not investigate the full range of Iran's instruments of power in advancing its national security and it will, specifically, explore Iran's possible actions in pure military incentives. The paper is divided into two main parts. The first part aims to explore the factors shaping Iran's perception about the biggest threat affecting its national security. Factors such as Iran's geography, ideology, history and culture will be explored and will show how these factors formed Iran's skepticism about other powers. It will demonstrate that the Iranian will continue perceiving that their country is vulnerable to external aggression. The second part aims to give the actions that Iran can take to either maintain or advance its national security and at what condition these actions could be taken. It will show that, under status quo condition, Iran will continue its conventional and ballistic missile build up as well as it will work to maintain its sphere of influence in the region. Also, the paper will show that Iran can advance its nuclear capability if it loses its sphere of influence in the area without being integrated into the international community, or if an aggression directly threatens it.

Introduction

Hypothetically, the nuclear agreement between the (P5+1) countries and Iran is a recognition by the international community to put Iran back as before the 1979 revolution. Iran's after the agreement should be no longer a rogue state in international law, or no longer part of the hostile axis of the United States and its alliance. However, there are opportunities and challenges for this theory to progress into a reality on the ground.

The political events are developing very fast within the Middle East and are progressing towards the unpredictable. The infinite political complexities that are intertwined today in the whole Middle East will not disappear instantaneously with this nuclear agreement and the complexities of the political status in the region are adding to the difficulty in determining what Iran foreign policy would be after the nuclear deal. The resolution to the chronically unstable situation in the region requires a far more comprehensive solution that can base on solid foundations, and this paper does not aim to explore such solutions, rather it will focus on what to expect in Iranian foreign policy after the nuclear deal.

With these concerns in mind, the paper will aim to identify the Iranian security concerns and the perceived threats affecting the Iranian state in 2016 and for the coming couple of years. The paper will present an argument about the possible actions that Iran can take to advance its national security agenda. As well, it will be important to take into consideration under what conditions Iran might implement and follow those possible actions. The paper will not investigate the full range of Iran's instruments of power in advancing its national security and it will, specifically, explore Iran's possible actions in pure military incentives.

The paper argues that Iran's biggest security concern is to preserve its independence from external aggressions and according to the Iranian threat perception, this objective would be achieved through developing Iran's strategic depth by extending its sphere of influence in the region as well as building its conventional and ballistic missile capabilities. The actions that Iran as a state would take, under the status quo conditions, will be to continue its conventional weapon build up and modernizations. As well, Iran will continue its ballistic missile advancements. Also, it will continue its support to the Syrian and Iraqi regimes and will try to maintain its relations with militia's groups such as "Hezbollah and the Islamic Jihad. Hence the paper will conclude that, despite the nuclear agreement, Iran will advance its nuclear program if an external aggression is directly threatening it or if it is not integrated into the international community as well as if its strategic depth and influence in the region declines.

The paper is divided into two main parts. The first part aims to explore the factors shaping Iran's perception about the biggest threat affecting its national security. Factors such as Iran's geography, ideology, history and culture will be explored and will show how these factors formed Iran's skepticism about other powers. It will demonstrate that the Iranian will continue perceiving that their country is vulnerable to external aggression. The second part aims to give the actions that Iran can take to either maintain or advance its national security and at what condition these actions could be taken. It will show that, under status quo condition, Iran will continue its conventional and ballistic missile build up as well as it will work to maintain its sphere of influence in the region. Also, the paper will show that Iran can advance its nuclear capability if it loses its sphere of influence in the area without being integrated into the international community or if an aggression directly threatens it.

Iran's Security Perspectives

It is prudent before exploring Iran's security perspectives to investigate the reasons in perceiving Iran as a source of insecurity within the international community, particularly, after the 1979 Islamic revolution. This impression could be regarded to the Iranian failure to conform to recognized standards of conduct. Events such as the Islamic revolution in 1979 and the escalation of the hostages' crises at the U.S. embassy might have negatively impacted Iran's reputation in conforming to the standards of conduct in the international community. Also, the Iranian disputes with the international community for its violations of human rights, and its relation to what is considered "terrorist groups" as well as its nuclear program are all issues that had impacted the world perception in Iran being always in tension with the international community. Consequently, this continues anxiety with the outside world also has shaped the Iranian opinion of the importance to preserve and defend their independence.

Before attempting to investigate the possible Iranian actions in advancing their national security, it is crucial to understand more deeply the root cause of the Iranian biggest security concern in preserving Iran's independence from external aggressions. The first factor that had influenced the Iranian perception of an enduring external threat and antagonism is the geography of Iran. Iran with its large land mass of 1.6 million Sq. Km. is strategically located in the Asian continent. Its geopolitical centrality made it critical as a crossroad linking Europe, Asia, Indian sub continent and Africa. Also Iran is surrounded by four seas: the Caspian Sea to the north, and the Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman and Indian Ocean to the south.¹ Zagros and Alborz mountain ranges are located in the western and northern part of Iran, whereas the golden deserts of the Dasht-e Kavir and Dash-e Lut are located at the interior region of the country and, therefore, separating the north from south and east from west.² The population is mainly concentrated on

the inside of the mountain ranges at the northern and southern part of Iran leaving the desert with very low population density. So, historically due to this population distribution, the Iranian people were exposed to the external invasion very easily and left people under the ravage of war. The perception of an external threat was shaped in the Iranian consciousness through past experiences, and geography influenced that. Also, the geography had its impact in preserving the Iranian culture.³ The size of the country, demography, topography, and natural resources are all features related to geography and added in reinforcing the sense of distinguished culture. Consequently, it contributed to isolating Iran and consolidated the sense of regional pre-eminence as well as sensitizes the Iranian to the vulnerabilities of Iran's location.⁴

Iran history can be regarded as the second factor that had shaped the Iranian threat perception. Persia fell under foreign occupation several times. The fall of the Persian Achaemenian dynasty to Alexander the Great in (330 B.C.) is an example of a foreign dominance of Iran. In (224 A.D.) Persia emerged as empire again under the Sassanid dynasty; however, it witnessed an enduring struggle with the Roman and with Byzantine Empires as well as continued pressure from belligerent Central Asian nomads. In due course this continued struggle destabilized Persia, and in (637 A.D.) was invaded by the Arabs who continued to rule Persia until (1055 A.D.). From that point of history and until (1500 A.D.), Persia was governed in succession by foreign conquerors. In the year (1500 A.D.) the Persian Empire witnessed reawakening under the Safavid dynasty. However, again in the early eighteenth century, the country was invaded by the Afghans who continued to govern it until an army leader evicted them in 1737. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Iran was a victim of the imperial struggle between foreign powers over influence in the region. The struggle between Russia and Great Britain led to partitioning Iran into a sphere of influences under the Anglo-Russian

settlement of 1907. The British continued their influence over Iran for the first half of the twentieth century and Iran became a regional base for the British Empire in the Gulf region. Also, the British controlled Iran's oil resources through ownership of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company and when Iran's ruler Reza Shah declared Iran a neutral country at the beginning of the World War 2, Britain demanded Iran to expel the German engineers.⁵ Riza Shah refused the British demand and both Britain and the USSR invaded Iran in 1942. During the Cold War, the Shah was criticized by many Iranian intellectuals for subservience to the United States. Shortly after the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran, Saddam Husain had begun launching his attack against Iran and refusing the 1975 treaty that divided the waterway (Shat al Arab) between Iran and Iraq.⁶ In 2001 and post September 11 the U.S president George W. Bush declared that Iran is part of the "axis of evil" and the U.S. started their "war on terror" and invaded Afghanistan which is Iran's eastern neighbor. In March 2003, Iran's western neighbor and the first member of the "axis of evil" was attacked and occupied by the U.S. forces.

From illustrating the past 2500 years of Iran's history, it is obvious that foreign aggression against Iran was a predominant event in Iran's history. For this reason, it is not awkward to consider that Iran's security perception is evolving around preserving the country from external aggression.

Ideology is the third factor that contributed to establishing the Iranian security anxiety to external antagonism. The Shi'a line of Islam is recognized as a branch of political dissent in the Islamic World. It was used by the Iranian as an expression of nationalism and in the 16th century, it helped in expelling the Arab invasion.⁷ Therefore, following the ideology of Shi'a sect of Islam has on one hand helped the survival of Iran as a nation and, on the other hand, it has increased its isolation. The rivalry between the Arab and the Persian was strengthened by the

conflict between Shi'ites and Sunnis. Consequently, the ideological differences continued to hinder Iran's ability to forge a wider sphere of influence in the region and despite having a very similar culture as well as language ties with countries such as Afghanistan and Tajikistan; the ideological differences was a barrier in having special relations with them. Also, the "Twelver Shi'ism" that are followed in Iran regards strongly in the struggle against injustice and oppression, and since the Iranian history was full of fight with external powers occupation, the sense of doubt towards other powers was firmed up and the need to maintain independence and fortified the country was consolidated.⁸ In short, ideology impacted Iran's strategic thinking through boosting nationalism and consolidated the feeling of isolation as well as a sensation of being vulnerable to external aggression and strengthened the Iranian sense of the need to defend their country and fight the oppressors.

The fourth factor that can be related to building the Iranian security concerns is its culture. Although, Arabs invaded Iran for a lengthy period, the Iranian were able to preserve their culture by preserving their language, literature, and identity.⁹ Even the Shi'ite Islam that the Iranian has followed, it was a form of ideology that had mixed with ancient Persian Zoroastrian religion and hence it had added in preserving the Persian culture.¹⁰ The Iranian scholar Shahrokh Meskoob had quoted, "identity is a reactive matter and attention to self becomes more meaningful in relation to others".¹¹ This reflects the sense of pride in the Iranian minds. The Iranian cultural studies accentuate the importance of traditional Iranian and Shi'ite views on separating between the purity of the internal and the corruption of the external. Therefore, it seems that a sense of pride and superiority was embedded within the Iranian mindset. The contradicting thoughts between their pride of their perceived greatness and the extended periods of foreign domination have participated in shaping the suspicion of foreign

powers. In short, the Iranian culture was preserved and mixed thoughts of national pride and unpleasant memories of foreign governance have influenced the feeling of the need to preserve their independence.

Having said that, although, the external invasion or dominance is not the only Iran's threat concern; it remains the main threat in the Iranian strategic culture. Other fundamental drivers of advancing Iran's national security agenda could be the regime survival, however, this could be an actions that the Iranian could take internally within their domestic politics by shifting towards more the extremist within the Iranian political arena. Yet it does not follow that Iran is an expansionist, and it is faithful to recognize that the old perception of Iran seeking to export its revolutionary ideology is not correct, and currently it is used as rhetoric. However, it is also true to say that "it is natural for Iran's neighbors to perceive it as a competitor. Irrespective of their international alignment and the identity of their own rulers, they correctly perceive Iran as an ambitious regional actor whose quest to maximize its power and security can only come, at least partly, at the expense of their own interests and ambitions".¹²

Iran's Agenda in Advancing its National Security

Like any country in this anarchic international system, Iran's strategic vision is seeking to advance its security through several circles of defensive spaces. The paper argues that at the middle would be Iran itself as a land mass with its recognized international borders, with its Persian people, language, and culture. As well, with its ideology of Shi'ites Islam and with its clerical regime system that came with the 1979 Islamic revolution and the "Wilayat al-faqih" as the supreme leader in Iran, as well as it includes Iran's resources and all other constitutes that frame Iran as a country. Therefore, the previous composites are represented in this paper as the

nucleus. Surrounding this nucleus are rings of agendas that are the means used to secure as well as to advance Iran's national security. Having said "to advance" in this paper means to consolidate, to strengthen, and to reinforce its national security in the anarchic international system and does not mean that Iran's is having expansionist ambitions in the meaning leading to extending its border and occupy other countries. Also, it is not to say that Iran's is the most peaceful and the most neutral country in the world. What the paper means by "to advance" is that Iran is playing *Realpolitik* in its views to the international system and had as mentioned several rings that are all used to advance its national security by defending the nucleus at the center.

The first ring is the conventional military capabilities that are used to defend Iran from external and internal threats as well as used to support Iran's allies in the region. The second ring is the ballistic missile capabilities that are supporting the conventional military as well as the potential future nuclear capabilities. The third ring, the paper is considering, is the latent nuclear capabilities that were made in the silence mode after the last nuclear deal, but, still can be used if the fourth ring fails to achieve the desired objectives. At the third ring, it is possible to add extensive potential alliances with Russia and China. This full cooperation is a possibility that could support the advancement in the Iranian nuclear program. The fourth ring is considered the external rim and it is the first line of the Iranian defensive posture. This ring includes Iran's support to its allies and furthermore to the military groups in the regional countries.

The first ring is the Iranian conventional military capabilities. Iran's agenda in advancing its national security would be to build up and modernize its conventional military power. The current Iranian conventional capabilities are missing a lot regarding military arsenal and training. The past Iranian effort to modernize and build larger conventional force has been thwarted by sanctions exerted through the international community and the lack of currency.¹³ Following the

nuclear deal, the UNSCR 2231 has interdicted the sale of major weapons systems to Iran, and the ban should be lifted in five years after “Adoption Day”.¹⁴ Because of what been said, the Iran lacks the ability to deploy concentrated armed forces across long distances or waterways, and the arsenal that they are using are dated back to the seventies and eighties of the twentieth century. Iran’s lack the ability to launch highly coordinated and joint military operations. Its air force is in a poor shape and issues such as spare parts shortages are affecting its aircraft operational readiness. The situation with the army is not better and having a shortage of serviceable tanks and artillery.¹⁵ It will not be possible for the Iranian to win the fight if they rely alone on their conventional capabilities and the Iranian themselves acknowledging that they cannot compete with the U.S military in a conventional way. Consequently, once the ban on the arms sale to Iran is lifted after five years, Iran will possibly seek to modernize its conventional forces. It would likely pursue to modernize its armored vehicles, attack helicopters, and ground support aircraft, as well as advanced munitions.¹⁶ If they are engaged they will fight with asymmetric manner using the available conventional capabilities, and they will use the earlier mentioned rings of security. Also, Iran has developed a strategy of anti-access, aerial denial (A2/AD) and will constrain the ability of the other navies to operate in the Persian Gulf, as well as it could interrupt the world energy supply. Mines and other overlapping defensive threats are also can be used to defend the Iranian coastline from any attack.

Accordingly, the agenda for the Iranian in advancing their national security would be to modernize and further develop its conventional military capabilities. Also, it will continue utilizing its available conventional capabilities in supporting allies in the region and thus reinforcing the outer ring of this defensive posture.

The second defensive ring surrounding Iran is the ballistic missile arsenal. The possession of long-range missiles is considered by almost all Iranian leaders as vital to Iran's security. Tactically and strategically these missiles can be used by Iran even with the Iran nuclear program is halted by the agreement. Conventional or chemical/biological war heads delivered by these missiles can be an obstacle for any power attacking Iran on the battlefield. As well strategically; Iran can project its fire power well behind the line of operations and can gain strategic postures. The Iranian objective of self-reliance was achieved due to the relative easiness in manufacturing missiles domestically.¹⁷ Iran was able to follow a relatively advanced ballistic and cruise missile program and considered capable of projecting power. Iran's missile arsenal includes short to long range missiles, and it is effectively expanding its inventories and was able to boost the lethality and effectiveness. Shihab-3 with different versions "Meteor" and "Variant" can reach up to a range of 1500 miles. It is also suspected that by 2015 Iran might be able to develop an intercontinental missile with a range of 3000 miles. Short-range ballistic missile such as "Qiam" can reach 200 miles. "Khaliji Faris" the anti-ship cruise missile can reach any maritime activity within the Persian Gulf. Moreover, Iran has successfully launched its satellite on the Safir-2 rocket, and this reflects the advancement in the Iranian missile program.¹⁸

From reviewing Iran's success in developing its ballistic missile capabilities, it can be said that the missile program was an essential part of Iran's national security policy. It has been conducted openly, and it was heavily defended and justified by the Iranian government. Also since the UNSCR 2231 only "calls Iran to avoid the testing and development of ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons for eight years after "Adoption Day""¹⁹, it is possible that Iran will further develop its ballistic missile capabilities and this will be the agenda that Iran will try to advance in this ring under the status quo condition. However, the

missile arsenal is a threat to other powers in the region. Iran can attack targets throughout the Persian Gulf, Israel, and even Europe. It also can carry nuclear or biological and chemical warhead. Even with these capabilities in the Iranian hand, the Iranian is expected to be pragmatic in their strategies and they will not use it to attack, and due to their defensive mind set it is possible to consider it as a deterrent and defensive weapons.

The third ring of Iran's security policies is its nuclear ambition. For so long Iran has worked in developing the nuclear technology. The issue of Iran nuclear intentions is a debatable topic. The Iranian have always insisted that they are developing their nuclear program for peaceful purposes and not to build nuclear weapons, citing their supreme leader formal pronouncement (fatwa) which states that the nuclear weapons are un-Islamic, banning the acquisition, production and the use of nuclear weapons. Iran stresses that its program was peaceful and the (Fatwa) is considered a religious commitment by the Iranian Supreme Leader and passed to his followers to obey otherwise discounting it constitute a sin.²⁰ However, facts on the ground showed that the Iranian had reached 20% level of uranium enriching, and it was well above the required enrichment for peaceful usages. Also, finding a stockpile of 2200 lb of low-enriched uranium and 400 lb of 20% enriched uranium at Fordow site as well as owning 1000 advanced centrifuges and producing plutonium by heavy water plant at Arak site are all indications that Iran has crossed the requirements for a peaceful program.²¹ Moreover, the (Fatwa) argument can be countered, Michael Eisenstadt and Mehdi Khalaji argued that "a fatwa is issued in response to specific circumstance and can be altered in response to changing conditions... Thus, nothing would prevent Khamenei from modifying or supplanting his nuclear Fatwa should circumstances dictate a change in policy."²² Therefore, evidences on the ground are endorsing that Iran has crossed over the limits of a peaceful technicality for its nuclear

program and the possibility to alter the Fatwa when facing different circumstances are all pointing that Iran can use its latent nuclear expertise when required to do so.

Before going through the agenda, at this ring, that the Iranian might take to advance their national security, it is essential to explore the reason behind the Iranian passion towards obtaining atomic knowledge. It can be related to how the Iranian perceives their country as being isolated against Israel, Russia and the U.S forces in the region with no alliances as well as its location in a region with nuclear neighbors such as Pakistan and India. The Iranian worked to use the nuclear deterrence approach to keep Iran's sovereignty protected from external aggression and as a prestige that can give the Iranian the political power within the region.²³

The recent historic nuclear deal between Iran and the US means that Iran will lose its capacity to build nuclear weapons and will be limited to energy and peaceful purposes. As well, the deal blocks all the potential pathways Iran could utilize to produce a nuclear weapon and Iran must submit to regular monitoring, inspection and verification by the IAEA. Although the deal will limit Iran's nuclear capacity, it will remove the earlier oil restrictions placed on the Iranian oil exports and will free the frozen \$100 billion assets as well as it will get rid of the financial restrictions that have been placed on Iran's banks. Also and most importantly, Iran will be free from its isolation and will have better relations with the US and other western powers.

It is possible to say that the recent nuclear deal means that Iran's nuclear capacity has been permanently curtailed, but it has possibly strengthened Iran's national security through improving Iran's economic outlook and its relationship with the international community. However, what could be the scenario if Iran's relation with the international community worsens or if its sphere of influence in the region declines? The answer would be possibly that Iran can

advance its national security through reviving its latent nuclear capability. And that could be likely due to the enduring and deep Iran's perception of its vulnerability. In short, if Iran is not integrated in the international community after implementing the nuclear deal, or If the Syrian regime collapses, and the power of Hezbollah and other groups decline, or terminated, then the Iranian will not be hesitant to follow the path in recovering their nuclear program as an agenda that they might take. One could argue that the nuclear deal has eliminated any possibility of Iran being nuclear. However, it is unknown how much knowledge and capabilities the Iranian had reached in the field of nuclear know-how. Despite the nuclear agreement and its items to ensure that Iran is complying with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the nuclear deal, it could be true that due to the international community bureaucratic politics, a longer time will be needed before an action is taken against Iran. Moreover, if Iran is closer enough in acquiring a workable nuclear weapon, then the action would be useless.

The fourth ring of the Iranian national security structure is its relation with militant groups such as Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Islamic Jihad groups as well as with the Syrian and Iraqi regimes. Through creating a sphere of influence in the region, Iran has aimed to maintain its independence. The strategy of supporting these militant groups and regimes has given Iran an increased strategic depth to homeland defense. Also, Iran benefitted from this support through giving it legitimacy among Arab publics as being witnessed, in many Arab capitals, as being “more Arab than the Arabs”, particularly, with the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. As well, Iran is supporting Al-Asad of Syria in its war against ISIL and other groups that are fighting the regime. The Iranian support is a notable expansion of Iran’s willingness to project its military power beyond the Iranian borders. Also, it shows the Iranian ability to mobilize the Lebanese Hezbollah as well as Iraqi’s Shi’a militants to participate on a direct combat role in both Syria and Iraq.²⁴

Hence, it can be concluded that, in status quo condition, Iran will continue providing the support to these militant groups in the region.

This ring is intertwining with the nuclear ring and despite the nuclear deal; it is obvious that Iran is continuing its support to these entities. Iran's defense minister declared in Teheran last September that Iran will continue providing material support to Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Islamic Jihad.²⁵ The nuclear deal gives the opportunity to integrate Iran's into the world political and economic structure. However, the intense and prolonged feeling of vulnerability and isolation as well as its anxiety from external aggression will direct Iran towards keeping its links with these groups. Also, the Iranian asymmetric warfare strategies that are built for the last three decades were shaped by its perception of its weakness in confronting conventionally strong powers. So it is possible that Iran will continue this sphere of influence as it gave it leverage in fighting other powers asymmetrically away from its borders. However, if this sphere of influence is declined or terminated, it can be expected that Iran might return to reinforce the nuclear ring by reviving its hidden possible capability.

Conclusion

Iran's foreign policy after the nuclear deal was investigated. Specifically, the paper concentrated on possible agendas in pure military incentives and did not investigate other instruments of power that Iran might follow. Initially, the paper has identified the Iranian security concerns and found that preserving Iran from external aggression was the main perceived threat by the Iranian, and are affecting their agendas for the actions that they are taking in the future. Iran's geography, ideology, history, and culture were all formed Iran's skepticism about other powers and these factors participated in forming this sensitivity in the Iranian

mindset in perceiving that their country is vulnerable to external aggression. The paper identified that in this anarchic international system, Iran's strategic vision is advancing its security through several circles of defensive spaces. The paper assumed that Iran as a country with all of its ingredients is at the middle and are represented in this document as the nucleus. Surrounding this nucleus are rings of agendas that are the means used to secure Iran's national security. The research found that the actions that Iran as a state would take, under the status quo conditions, will be to continue its conventional weapon build up and modernizations. As well, Iran will pursue its ballistic missile advancements. Also, it will continue its support to the Syrian and Iraqi regimes and will try to maintain its relations with militia's groups such as "Hezbollah and the Islamic Jihad. Finally, the paper concluded that, despite the nuclear agreement, Iran will advance its nuclear program if an external aggression is directly threatening it or if it is not integrated into the international community. Also, the paper argued that Iran will attempt to advance its nuclear program if it cannot maintain its influence in the region particularly that this influence is shaped by a pure deep perception of the vulnerability of an external aggression and the Iranian aspiration of fighting this aggression asymmetrically.

Iran possible actions in advancing their national security are part of the infinite political complexities that are intertwined today in the Middle East. The resolution to the chronically unstable situation in the region requires a far more comprehensive solution that can base on several pillars. The settlement of world powers on their interests either in the region or the whole globe is necessary. As well the coexistence between the regional powers is crucial and finding common ground to work collectively for prosperity and progress of their nations are vital and part of those pillars. Also, regional powers must forget the ideological, as well as their religion

differences and they, should work to reduce radicalizing their societies. Moreover, governance within the regional countries should be based on genuine values such as just rule, equality and proper representations that can give the opportunity for all are essential and part of the solution.



Notes

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